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Security Council

Sixty-fifth year

Provisional

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Tuesday, 16 February 2010, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Araud	(France)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Barbalić
	Brazil	Mrs. Viotti
	China	Mr. La Yifan
	Gabon	Mr. Issoze-Ngondet
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Lebanon	Ms. Ziade
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Nigeria	Mr. Onemola
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Turkey	Mr. Apakan
	Uganda	Mr. Rugunda
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Mr. Wolff

Agenda

The situation concerning Iraq

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1883 (2009) (S/2010/76)

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10-24053 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning Iraq

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1883 (2009) (S/2010/76)

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Iraq, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al Bayati (Iraq) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Ad Melkert, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Melkert to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I draw the attention of Council members to document S/2010/76, which contains the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1883 (2009).

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Ad Melkert. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Melkert: This is a significant moment at which to brief the Council on developments and prospects in Iraq. When I spoke here three months ago, the electoral law that had just been adopted by the Council of Representatives after a complicated set of negotiations was vetoed by Vice-President al-Hashemi. That set in motion another round of deliberations that eventually were concluded with an amended law with stronger and broader support than the first version. That was very much constitutional democracy in action, with the United Nations in a position to respond to calls from the wide spectrum of representatives to assist in building bridges towards consensus. It was an important moment for Iraq to rally broad support behind the 7 March election date, which will mark the transition from the first full term of a democratically elected Parliament to the next term.

There are still forces against that national agreement that seek to interfere violently in the reconstruction and reconciliation processes that the overwhelming majority of the Iraqi people would like to succeed. While, regrettably, those forces continue to kill and target innocent pilgrims, public servants, police officers and election candidates, they cannot reverse the progress that is taking place in Iraq. The determination of Iraqis to resist the return of the perils of the past is real and strong — stronger than the heinous forces behind the attacks. However, more international attention and engagement are needed to allow the people of Iraq to determine their future in their own way. Allow me therefore to share some thoughts on the forthcoming elections and the transition to the next Parliament and Government.

First, I would like to caution against the persistent skepticism and impatience that characterize much of the discourse and reporting on Iraq. Yes, it is not difficult to note imperfections, gaps and contradictions in the ongoing process, but that is not the heart of the matter if one considers the decades of conflict and crime that have gravely affected Iraq's society, economy, administration and international standing. The crux is now to see whether there is a genuine effort under way to reconstruct and innovate. That is what, in many different ways, is happening. It deserves to be seen and properly understood, unprecedented as it is in the course of a long and distinguished history.

Secondly, it is important that lessons be learned in the process and properly applied in the future in

order to minimize the re-emergence of contentious issues. From the perspective of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), it will be highly relevant to advise the new Government on the general fundamentals of electoral legislation and parliamentary procedures, as well as to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the three powers, as that is necessary to strengthen the authority of the institutions.

Thirdly, there has been much attention paid to the so-called de-Baathification of candidates for the elections. It should be noted that the principle of drawing a line between a former dictatorial regime and a newly developing democratic order has been seen in other places. The application of the principle is entirely an Iraqi responsibility. What has made matters complex, however, from the perspective of general international standards for preparing free and fair elections is the lack of transparency that has marked the process from the outset. UNAMI has consistently emphasized the due process requirements and abstained from judging the outcomes.

While reason for concern remains with regard to their impact, decisions on the candidate lists should be assessed in the context of the electoral process as a whole. What eventually will matter most is the acceptance by the Iraqi people of the election results. We will continue to do our utmost to advice and remind all stakeholders of the need to respect fundamental standards and to strive for consensus-building in reconciling the polarized past with a more harmonious future.

A fourth and different point in preparing for the transition has been the adoption of the budget. It is expected that this will allow for short-term support commitments by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in order to deal with the setback of oil price decreases during the past few years. However, transforming the budget into a strategic instrument for prioritizing and directing expenditures and investments remains a big task ahead.

The integrated United Nations Mission is preparing its advice and support to the new Government. It is doing so by seeking closer cooperation with the World Bank in particular. It is hoped that everyone will step up to the plate. Iraq needs fewer projects and more strategic advice. It needs to be connected to global standards of governance that will be of great benefit to the business climate, and it should urgently respond to the social deficits that squarely put the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals high on the agenda as a moral imperative and economic necessity, as the skills of its workers will define whether and when Iraq can live up to its full potential.

Fifthly, full transparency and combating corruption in revitalizing the oil industry would have a major impact on the future and will improve investor confidence.

It should be welcomed that Kurdistan Regional Prime Minister Saleh has taken the initiative to address the issue of transparency with regards to the contracts signed by the Kurdistan Regional Government. Clarifying the competencies between the federal and the regional governments is an indispensable aspect of transition towards a more stable future. At the same time, with the successful conclusion of important oil contracts, urgency has returned to the stage of avoiding the pitfalls of monoproduction and the quick-win exploitation of resources. After all, stability and prosperity are closely intertwined.

I would like to say a few words on the role of the United Nations in the important priority areas.

First, on the preparations for 7 March, elections are not only about politics, but require a lot of hard work on the ground. The United Nations electoral team has continued to play a key role in advising and technically supporting the Independent High Electoral Commission. As a result of a huge collective effort, the infrastructure is in place to allow approximately 18.9 million Iraqi voters to visit 48,000 polling stations on election day. Preparations are also under way for out-of-country voting in 16 countries that host large Iraqi communities in diaspora.

Security is a vital consideration for these elections, in relation both to the integrity of the process and to voter confidence. The Government of Iraq and the Iraqi security forces have the lead in this important area.

Furthermore, observation of the electoral process plays a pivotal role in ensuring the credibility of the elections and their oversight. The United Nations is playing an active role in assisting civil society to assume this role through the funding of an initiative that has trained over 29,000 domestic observers. International observers are being coordinated through

the good offices of the European Union in cooperation with the Independent High Electoral Commission. Although UNAMI will not observe the elections due to its role in supporting the Commission, our Mission will undertake its own poll-watching activities, sending teams to different locations in the country as a confidence-building initiative.

Acceptance of the results is of paramount importance and will be the litmus test for the success or failure of the process. UNAMI is supporting the Independent High Electoral Commission in developing a robust and timely complaints mechanism to ensure that the credibility of the results is not eroded by a delay in adjudication of complaints. While it is expected that preliminary results will be published in the days following 7 March, final results could take considerable time, with the Federal Supreme Court certifying the election results once all appeals have been resolved.

The next point I would like to make is on the national coexistence agenda. For the near future, cementing long-term stability between the federal State of Iraq and the Kurdish region is of paramount importance. Different signs of goodwill, including on joint security arrangements, seem to signal potential for further progress.

In the High-level Task Force that has continued to meet under UNAMI auspices, progress has been made to address issues that stand in the way of normal life and business in disputed areas, including property matters. I recently traveled to Kirkuk to support the work of the Kirkuk property committee in their inaugural meeting. In my visit to local multi-ethnic communities, I got a strong impression that daily issues are the same for all communities and that much of the discussion on boundaries and competences is considered "higher" politics, not necessarily connected with the average citizen's practical concerns about living together. This should hopefully serve as a reminder and inspiration for the inevitable "high" political dialogue that is ahead of us.

UNAMI intends to interact with key representatives of the different communities in order to encourage progress on outstanding questions that are fundamental for security, stability and economic and social progress in Iraq as a whole. The coexistence agenda and the process towards solutions will have to be decided by the Iraqi parties themselves. The United Nations is ready to facilitate these steps at the request of parties. I have observed growing consensus that the time has come to address the administrative arrangements for Kirkuk and other areas and to ensure long-term agreements on revenue-sharing and provision of security.

Next, a word on the Chapter VII mandates. A next post-election priority will be the endeavour to promote constructive neighbourhood relations between Iraq and Kuwait, in conclusion of a period of turbulence. My visit to Kuwait in January and the consultations with the Government of Iraq prior to the visit were intended to provide me with a first-hand impression of the positions of the two sides. I was pleased with the keen interest demonstrated by my interlocutors on both sides in resolving all outstanding issues in the period ahead. This would be an important step in the Council's deliberations on resolution 1859 (2008) and will hopefully pave the way for a new era in the relationship between Iraq and the United Nations.

On the policy agenda and development assistance, with a new Government starting its work in the course of the year, there is an opportunity for the United Nations to transform its support of primarily humanitarian tasks into a more development- and policy reform-oriented advisory role. Integration will be the name of the game for United Nations contributions. The United Nations family in Iraq has identified four key areas where the United Nations has specialized knowledge and demonstrated experience: post-election activities, including census and civil registration; broader engagement in the disputed internal boundaries areas in the context of local area economic and social development; reform of the public distribution system and the development of social safety nets; and water resources management and relevant issues of transborder cooperation.

We are also in the final stages of producing the first United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for Iraq for the period 2011-2014, prepared in close consultation with the Government of Iraq and concurrently with the preparation of the Iraq National Development Plan. The agencies, funds and programmes have also discussed practical measures to ensure that the UNDAF will be fully funded, particularly in the light of the closure of the United Nations Development Group Iraq Trust Fund as from 30 June 2010.

Finally, a word on the future United Nations presence in Iraq: I would like to draw the Council's attention to this in anticipation of a more specific analysis on the next reporting occasion. With its National Development Plan, the Government of Iraq counts on enlarged support by the United Nations, increasingly operating from and in the country. Against the backdrop of the drawdown of the United States Forces in Iraq security and logistical support, there will be considerable implications for the way that the United Nations can organize itself to respond to future demand for presence and programmes.

In close cooperation with United Nations Headquarters, we are currently exploring the arrangements for the future. Continued presence, let alone increasing the United Nations footprint in different parts of Iraq, will come with a higher price tag. For the plans of the new Government and for our own operational preparation, it will be important to count on the Council's attention and guidance.

In conclusion, let me reiterate my gratitude to the men and women who, in still difficult circumstances, continue to keep the United Nations flag and spirit high. It is a privilege to work with this truly international community in assisting the people of Iraq. I was happy to recently welcome the new Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Jerzy Skuratowicz of Poland, who in many places in the world has proven to be another true United Nations ambassador. In leading the mission together with him and the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Christine McNab, I look forward to the Council's ongoing guidance and support.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Melkert for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Al Bayati (Iraq): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I would also like to present our thanks to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of China, for his distinguished efforts during his presidency in the month of January. Our thanks also go to Mr. Ad Melkert, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, and to the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) team in Iraq and New York for their tireless work to assist the Government and people of Iraq.

Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate the new members of the Security Council, the friendly countries of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Gabon, Lebanon and Nigeria on assuming their duties as non-permanent members of the Security Council. We wish them success in their work. I wish to express Iraq's deep appreciation to those members of the Security Council whose terms ended in December — the friendly countries of Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Croatia, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and Viet Nam — for the great efforts exerted throughout their membership in the Council to assist the Iraqi people.

My delegation took note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of UNAMI, issued in document number S/2010/76, and would like to make the following comments.

On the political and security levels, on 7 December 2009 the political blocs were able to adopt an amended Election Law and came through this difficult phase in which heated political controversy threatened to disrupt the political process. The Iraqi people have overcome many difficulties and challenges and are determined today to benefit from this experience, which gives them a strong motive for broad participation in the upcoming elections to select their representatives wisely.

The approval of the amended Election Law proves that the Iraqis have the ability to overcome their differences through dialogue in order to resolve outstanding issues. They were able to lift the final obstacles in order to pave the way to an epic campaign to strengthen national unity, build the rule of law and institutions, consolidate the democratic experience and achieve their national aspirations.

The Iraqi Government is working now to develop a security plan for the coming elections so that the atmosphere is conducive to holding elections on 7 March 2010, as specified in the Constitution, despite the determined efforts of the enemies of Iraq and the Iraqi people — such as Al-Qaida and the remnants of Saddam's dictatorial regime — to block the march of democracy, freedom and the rule of law. Two days ago, the leader of the so-called Islamic State in Iraq, which is affiliated with the Al-Qaida terrorist organization, threatened to disrupt the election process and to attack Iraqis who would participate in the elections.

In the context of developments in the upcoming national parliamentary elections, I would like to stress that the Accountability and Justice Commission is a constitutional and legal body, the establishment of which is stipulated in the Iraqi Constitution. The Iraqi Council of Representatives has also approved the Accountability and Justice Law. Today, however, we are witnessing political debates concerning the decision of the Accountability and Justice Commission to exclude a number of candidates. Following the recent meeting of the Presidency Council, the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the House, attended by the Chief Justice, it has been agreed that the Court of Cassation will only review the files of 177 candidates excluded from the elections and reach a decision before the start of the election campaign.

In an *Al Arabia* interview on 12 February, Prime Minister Nuri Al-Maliki emphasized that the majority of those excluded from the upcoming elections are Shia and that the majority of Sunnis are happy with the steps that have been taken and are expected to participate widely in the elections. The Prime Minister also mentioned that many senior military commanders from the time of Saddam are still in their positions because they did not commit any crime against the Iraqi people. Many were forced to join the Baath Party, the Prime Minister acknowledged, and will have no action taken against them so long as they respect the new Iraqi Constitution and laws.

It should be noted that the exclusion of certain candidates is related to the issuance of court rulings for non-political crimes or false documentation, and is not because of the Accountability and Justice Law.

The Independent High Electoral Commission announced on 9 February, at the Rashid Hotel in Baghdad, that the date of the start of the election campaigns of the candidates nominated by political entities and of the advertising campaigns would be 12 February 2010. The President of the Independent High Electoral Commission announced the preparation of 52,000 voting stations and the appointment of 350,000 staff members to manage the electoral process, which will involve 19 million voters. The Commission is also preparing for the voting that will take place in 16 countries in which Iraqis live abroad. Iraqis will be able to vote from Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Iran, Austria, Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Australia, Turkey, Canada, and the United States of America.

The security situation in Iraq continues to improve, despite occasional attacks targeting Iraqi civilians. The latest statistics from the Ministries of Defence, Interior and Health indicate that 196 Iraqis died in attacks during the month of January 2010 — a 56 per cent decrease from December 2009, which witnessed 306 casualties.

I should also point out that the recent terrorist attacks that killed dozens and wounded hundreds of unarmed civilians, including men, women and children, targeted visitors who walk on foot from various regions of Iraq to visit the holy shrine of Imam Hussein bin Ali bin Abu Taleb, the grandson of Prophet Mohammad who was killed along with all of his family and followers in 680 A.D., during the time of the Umayyad Dynasty. Since that time, visitors have traditionally visited his grave. Saddam's regime tried to prevent visitors to the Imam Hussein shrine from travelling on foot, but they insisted on continuing to practice their faith, whatever the sacrifice, which led to clashes between the repressive apparatus of Saddam's regime and the visitors, who were killed and injured. The bombings prove that the enemies of Iraq, such as Al-Qaida and the violent remnants of Saddam's regime, will not hesitate to kill innocent men, women and children, and that there is no alternative for the Iraqi Government but to fight and destroy them in order to preserve the lives of its citizens.

Here, I would like to recall the letter of the Prime Minister dated 30 August 2009, in which he requested the establishment of an independent international commission of inquiry to investigate the terrorist attacks that rocked the country, since key elements involved in these attacks fell outside the jurisdiction of the Iraqi State. Hundreds of Iraqis have been killed and thousands wounded in these attacks, and my Government still looks forward to a positive response from the Security Council to stop the bloodshed in Iraq.

As part of the Iraqi Government's efforts to improve the security situation in the city of Baghdad, the Ministry of Planning is now studying a project to install 10,000 surveillance cameras in Baghdad, aimed at securing greater monitoring and investigation capacity. Also, with a view to strengthening the capacity of the Iraqi Air Force, the month of February

witnessed the graduation of 17 helicopter pilots who completed their training, the first group of its kind since 2003.

The improved security situation and the systematic plans for the Iraqi Government to bring home Iraqis displaced abroad have led to an increase in the number of Iraqis who have returned to the country. For example, the latest report issued by the International Organization for Migration indicates the return of 350,000 displaced Iraqis to their home areas. The problems faced by the majority of these people are the lack of employment opportunities and the lack of resources. In this context, the Ministry of Displacement and Migration, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration, has implemented the Programme of Human Security and Stability in Iraq to help some 8,500 families who have returned to their homes across Iraq, through financial support and the creation of jobs to eliminate unemployment in these families.

The recent poll conducted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees said that about 200,000 displaced people want to return to Iraq, and explained that many Iraqis were eager to return home given the remarkable stability of the security situation. On 3 December 2009, the Iraqi Government signed a memorandum of understanding with the International Organization for Migration to facilitate that organization's work in providing services to displaced persons and returnees and to strengthen the ties of cooperation with the Iraqi Government, especially after the significant improvement in the security situation.

The Iraqi people's enjoyment of their fundamental rights, especially the freedom of expression, as stipulated by the constitution, is a cornerstone of the ongoing political process in the country. Iraq's participation in a recent poll by World Opinion in Washington which was conducted in 24 countries demonstrates that Iraq has become one of the countries that make and adopt opinion polls in complete freedom and transparency, and represents international recognition that Iraqis enjoy freedom of expression.

For the first time, Iraq was elected to membership of the Executive Board of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, for the period from 2010 to 2012, during the Meeting of States Parties to the Convention held at The Hague from 30 November to 4 December 2009.

On the social and economic level, under the auspices of Prime Minister Nuri Kamel al-Maliki, on 11 December 2009 the Iraqi Government held a second round of competition for offers for oil-field service contracts. Here the Prime Minister stressed that the Government will provide all facilities for those companies that win oil licenses. This resulted in 15 companies from around the world winning service contracts for seven Iraqi oil fields. The holding of this round of oil and gas licensing is a second important turning point in the process of construction and reconstruction through open and transparent investment of oil wealth and is in the interest of the Iraqi people after decades of oil wealth having been disabled because of the policies of the former regime.

It is expected that oil-field development projects will increase Iraq's oil production and that average production will reach 6 million barrels per day during the next six years, and nearly 12 million barrels per day by 2020 — a strategic objective that the Iraqi Oil Ministry is now working towards. Exported oil production for the month of January 2010 increased to 1.98 million barrels per day, and the Iraqi Government is planning to increase the amount of oil exports in 2010 to 2.325 million barrels per day.

The Oil Minister, Mr. Hussain al-Shahristani, has announced the establishment of a fourth national oil company to oversee the development of oil fields in the middle of Iraq. This company will also be responsible for developing the oil fields located in Baghdad and surrounding provinces. Oil commissions have also been established in Dhi Qar in the south and Nineveh in the north in order to oversee the implementation of oil contracts in those provinces.

The Iraqi Government is working to ensure that its citizens benefit directly from the projected increase in oil production. Studies indicate that the average person's share of Iraqi oil revenues will rise from $1,534 in 2010 to $3,361 in 2015, and to $9,488 in 2020. Federal budget expenditures in Iraq are also predicted to increase, to $132 billion in 2015 and to $256 billion in 2020, which will be reflected in accumulated investment allocations totalling $138 billion between 2010 and 2015, and $496 billion between 2010 and 2020. These accumulations will

attract and encourage both domestic and foreign investment in Iraq.

As part of the Iraqi Government's efforts to ensure the highest degree of transparency in the investment and management of oil wealth, on 10 January 2010 Iraq joined the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) following the recommendation of the EITI Initiative Department that Iraq be among the 34 countries that have joined so far.

Last month, the Iraqi Council of Representatives approved a federal budget for 2010 totalling $72.4 billion, which includes $51 billion to fund operating expenses and $19.5 billion to be invested in financing reconstruction projects in the country.

On 29 January 2010, Baghdad witnessed the laying of the foundation stone of the largest tourist hotel in Iraq, with twin 26-storey towers and 550 rooms at an estimated cost of $150 million. The mayor of Baghdad announced the beginning of more than 25 such investment projects in the third instalment of investment projects for the development of the city. These will include the establishment of major residential, industrial and shopping areas, hotels, modern restaurant chains and infrastructure projects. The National Investment Commission is also working to make 2010 a year of achievement, and has developed an investment plan involving 750 projects in Iraq.

The Iraqi Council of Ministers approved the national poverty reduction strategy recommended by the Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation in collaboration with the World Bank. This strategy aims to increase the income of the poor and improve the quality of health and educational services provided to them, with the provision of adequate housing and effective social protection, in order to reduce poverty by 30 per cent from 2007 levels.

As part of the Iraqi Government's efforts to reactivate the central supermarkets, the Central Supermarkets Company made profits estimated at $15.8 million in 2009, an increase of 169 per cent on 2008 profits.

In the context of regional and international openness, the recent period witnessed the visit of United States Vice-President Joseph Biden to Baghdad on 22 January 2010 to discuss strengthening bilateral relations, and the visit of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic Mr. Jan Kohout on 25 November 2009. The visit of the European Union Commissioner for Energy, Mr. Andris Piebalgs, on 18 January 2010 witnessed the signing of a cooperation agreement in the field of energy between Iraq and the European Union.

On 7 January 2010, Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki visited Iraq and held talks about a number of files of bilateral interest to both countries and the formation of many of the relevant functional commissions to resolve outstanding issues. Of special importance was the issue of borders and the entrance of the Iranian forces into the Alfaka oil field inside Iraq, where the Iraqi Government was able to resolve the problem through negotiations that led to the withdrawal of Iranian forces from Iraqi territory.

Prime Minister Nuri Kamel al-Maliki visited Cairo on 21 December 2009 and met with His Excellency President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak to discuss the prospect of developing bilateral relations, and with the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Amr Moussa, to discuss ways of enhancing the Arab presence in Baghdad. Vice-President Adil Abdul-Mahdi visited Washington, D.C., on 14 January to discuss the withdrawal of United States forces from Iraq. On 1 February, Vice-President Tariq al-Hashemi also visited Washington, D.C., where he met with a number of senior United States officials to discuss political developments in Iraq. The Kurdistan Regional President, Mr. Masoud Barzani, also visited Washington, D.C., on 25 January in response to a formal invitation from President Barack Obama.

The Foreign Minister, Mr. Hoshyar Zebari, visited Rome and met with his Italian counterpart, Mr. Franco Frattini, during the meeting of the Iraqi-Italian Joint Commission on 14 December, and on 14 January participated in the Manama Dialogue conference, which discussed issues of regional security in the Gulf. Mr. Zebari also visited Oslo and met with Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre on 17 January to discuss the opening of a Norwegian embassy in Baghdad, its role in the development of bilateral relations, and the role of Norwegian companies in the development of the Iraqi oil industry.

On 1 February, in the framework of Iraq's efforts to resolve outstanding issues with Kuwait, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs published an announcement

requesting that Iraqi citizens possessing documents or any other Kuwaiti property seized by the former regime during the occupation of Kuwait in 1990 deliver them to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in order that they be returned to Kuwait.

In his report to the Security Council on the review of resolutions pertaining specifically to Iraq, the Secretary-General states:

> "It is important to recognize that the Iraq of today is very different from Iraq prior to 2003. It is my hope that the Security Council will consider this report with a view to taking appropriate decisions that would help Iraq to fulfil its outstanding obligations in a timely manner" (*S/2009/385, para. 67*).

In regard to this, I refer to the letter from the Minister for Foreign Affairs to the President of the Security Council, dated 19 January 2010, regarding the obligations of Iraq in the field of disarmament, which requested that the Security Council urgently look into the removal of all restrictions imposed pursuant to its resolutions on Iraq pertaining to disarmament and weapons of mass destruction, including resolutions 687 (1991) and 707 (1991).

In conclusion, I would like to stress my Government's gratitude to the Security Council for the role played by UNAMI in Iraq and for Mr. Melkert's support, offered at the Government's request and based on mutually agreed mechanisms.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no further speakers on my list. In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussions on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.